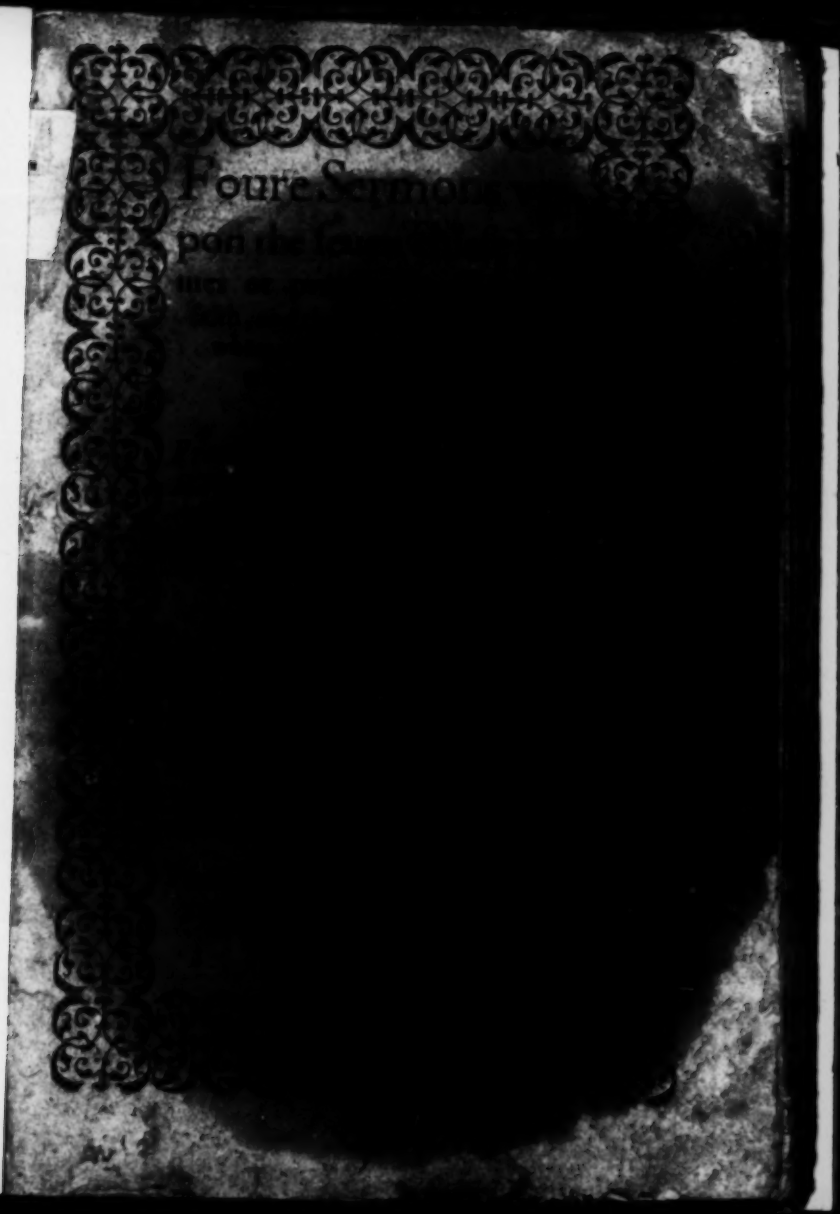

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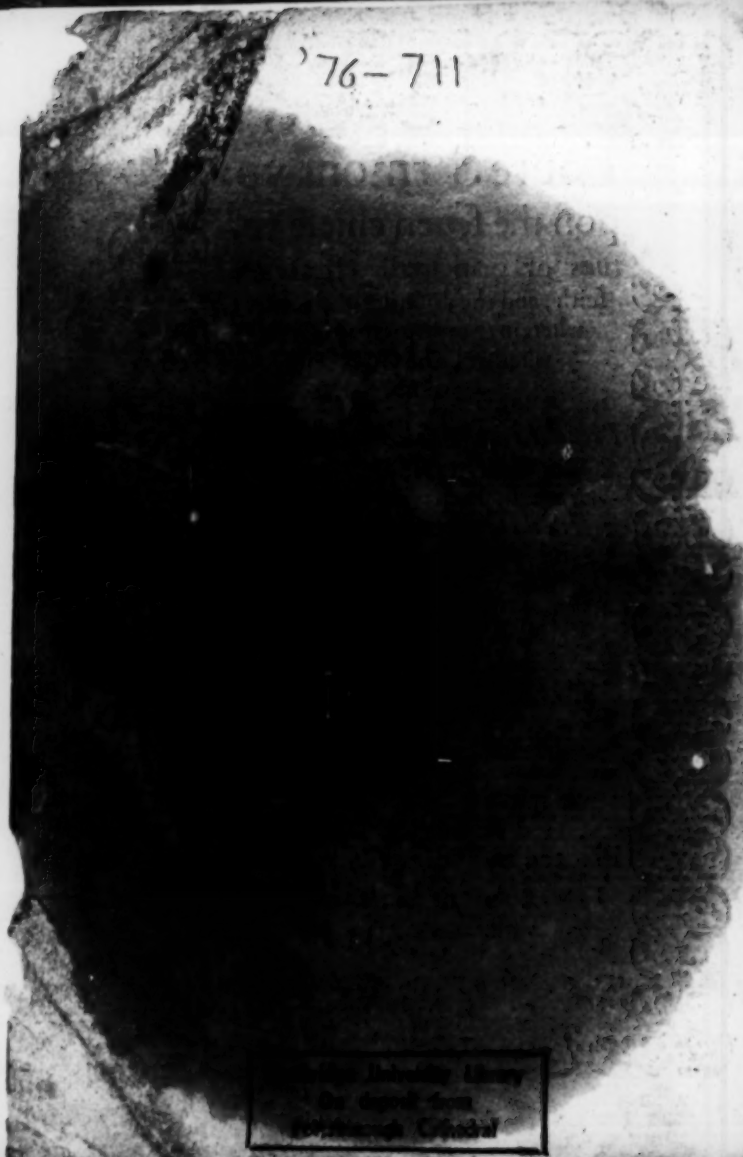

To the right honorable and
my very good Lady, the Lady
Frauncis, Coũtesse of Sussex, R. I. her most
humble and faithfull seruant in Christ,
wisheth all health and godli-
nesse, long to continue with
increase of vertue and
zeale in religion.

I Haue long time vvished (Right honorable) that I mighte in some [illegible] able, if not to recompence, vvhich indeed I shall neuer, yet at least to shevv some token of a gratefull minde for al the ancient kindnes, & louing fauor, vvhich I haue found at your hands: this hath caused me to let slip no occasion, vvhereby I mighte haue somevvhat to present you vvith-

all, vvhich mighte tende to your ſoules health: for concerning the things vvhich pertaine to the body, as honours, dignities, and riches, the high Lord of Lordes hath giuen you ſo much, though I vvould neuer ſo faine, yet I cãnot benefit you in them: hauing therefore of late a kinſeman at home vvith me, vvho being ſomvvhat of [illegible] hande, hath takẽ from the mouth of our Preacher, certaine of the Sermons he hath preached, vvhich being againe ouerſeene and corrected, I thought it my dutye, to offer them vnto your honour, as a taſt of thoſe frutes vvherevvith the Lord doth feede vs in the Coũtrey. Being a greate deale the more

more bold to doe it, becauſe I knovv they be ſuch as ye haue long time shevved a loue to taſt of, & I truſt theſe shall alſo come vnto you as ripe & timely fruites of pleaſant and delightſome taſt, although they be ſet before you in no golden or ſiluer plate, but as it vvere in a vvodden platter, for the holy Apoſtle S Paule ſaieth, that treaſure is brought in earthen veſſels. I beſeech your honour therfore to accept of my poore good vvil, & to take this my ſmal gift in good part, vvhich nothing doubting of, I pray god to multiply his bleſſings & graces vpon you, to his glory, and your euerlaſting comfort. Amen

Your honours in Chriſt,
Richard Ioſua Senior.

To the godly Reader.

Considering, that for a Christian, being sicke in soule, & desiring to be made sound: sorrowfull in spirit, & craving comfort: vnquiet in mind, and seeking to be at rest: wounded in conscience, and would be at safetie: tormented in thought, and longeth for relief: hauing offended God, and therefore is punished: visited with affliction, and faine would be deliuered, there is no other salue but the worde of God: and knowing also, that it is the dutie of euery good Christian in his calling to seeke, and labour after the aduancement, and increase of the kingdome of Christ, and the ouerthrow and vtter confusion of blindnesse, error, popery, superstition: & to be short, of all the power of Antichrist: I haue thought it my duty, the rather (Gentle Reader) to requeste hereunto by sundry godly me my friends, the Preather hereof to publish this booke, containing sundry points of doctrine tending to the comfort of the godly, & the assurance of their saluation, as also di-

uers

uers confutations of ſects and hereſies, which to him that readeth it with a well diſpoſed mind ſhalbe no leſſe profitable thē it is briefe. Maruell not at the ſhortneſſe of it: the cauſe thereof is this, that the repetition in the beginning of euery ſermon, to auoide tediouſneſſe, is omitted. Looke not for (I pray thee) fineneſſe of ſpeach, in the reading hereof: but waigh the matter deeply, & apply it to thy ſelfe effectually, that thou mayſt reape profit hereout, to thy ſoules health, and comfort, the which God graunt thee, for his Son Ieſus Chriſt his ſake. Amen.

Thine in Chriſt, Richard Ioſua Iunior.

The first Sermon vpon the first Chapter of the second Epistle of Saint Peter.

1 *Simon Peter a seruant and an Apostle of Iesus Christ, to you which haue obteined like precious faith with vs by the righteousnes of our Sauiour Iesus Christ.*

2 *Grace & peace be multiplied to you, thorough the acknowledging of god and of our Lord Iesus.*

3 *According as his diuine power hath giuen to vs all things that perteine vnto life and Godlinesse, through the acknowledging of him that hath called vs vnto glory and vertue.*

4 *Whereby most great and precious promises are giuen vnto vs, that by them ye should be partakers of the diuine nature, in that ye flee the corruption that is in the world*

BEfore we begin to handle or intreat of ỳ words of this text, it shall not be amisse to note to whome and when this epistle was written. Concerning the first of these, it appeareth by the third chap. and 1. ver. that it was written vnto the same that ỳ former epistle was. For thus he speaketh. This second Epistle I write vnto you, beloued, in which I stirre vp your sincere mind, by putting you in remembrance: nowe these were the Iewes which were scattred abrod in the dispersion through diuers countries, as it is expressed in the first chap. of the former Epistle: for ỳ Iews were specialy his charg as the care of the Gentiles was committed vnto Paule. Galatians the 2. chapter 7. and 8 verses. The wordes are these: when they saw that the Gospell of the vncircumcision was committed to mée, as the Gospell of the circumcision was vnto [illegible] was mightie by Peter in [illegible] the circumcision, [illegible] by me towardes the [illegible] this Epistle was written

written by Peter in his extreme age, when he had euen finished his course, and was readie to lay downe his tabernacle as he speaketh here in the 14. verse As for the occasions which moued him to write, they shall appeare in the particular handeling of the matters.

1. Now let vs come to the words of the text, the 1. verse hath two members: In the former he setteth forth his owne dignitie, that he is not only a seruant of God, but a principall seruaunt, and one which commeth vnto them as the Ambassadour of God, to the end they might knowe that they had to doe with God, and not with men, and so submit themselues to the doctrine & message which he brought: for whatsoeuer God spake by the Apostles, he so guided their tong and pen by his spirite, ỹ nothing which they spake or wrote was their owne, but altogither his. In ỹ second mẽber, he setteth forth the dignity which those to whom he writ had with himselfe: in these wordes, To those which haue obteined the like precious faith with vs: as if he shold say although I be aboue you in the Apostle-

like dignitie and function: yet you are equall with me & with the rest of the Apostles in the chiefe and principall dignitie, & in that wherein al happines doth consist, euen our precious faith. Here it may be demaunded, how S. Peter can ascribe vnto them a faith equall or like precious with his owne, seeing he did so farre excell them in giftes and graces, as in knowledg, & strength of faith. The answer is easie inough, namly that this cõparison is not made in the measure and quantitie of faith, for therein some haue excelled others farre, because God doth not giue his gifts al alike, but in ỹ effect which is the apprehending of Christ wt all his merits, which ỹ weak faith doth as wel as the strong, & therefore in this respect is equally precious. This I speak, not to make any slouthfull, when as the scriptures do pricke vs forward so much to seeke increase of faith, but for the comfort and heartning of the weake, which feeling their infirmities and weaknes of faith, if it were not for this which the Apostle speaketh, might doubte whether they were partakers of the same happi-

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nesse with them: now hearing this, they may be wel assured, although their faith should be but as a grain of mustardseed, yet if it bee true faith, it coupleth them to Christ, and maketh them partakers of redemption, to haue their sinnes washed away in his bloud of righteousnes, to be couered with his obedience of life, to be heires of the kingdome of glory, as well as the faith of Peter or any other. Vnto this is also adioyned ý wherein the stablenes of this their faith doth stand. as vpon a sure foundation, euen the righteousnesse of God and of our Sauiour Iesus Christe. And indeed the building of faith is so waighty, and the frame so heauie, that it can stand vpon no other foundation but this, that is to say, the righteousnesse, faithfulnesse, or truth of God, which cannot lye. For if we would perswade a man to beleeue by this reason, ý the thing which we speake is that which hath been taught by diuers men of great learning & singular godlines: yet because we know that all men are liars, excepte wee be sure that the thinges which they speake, be those which God hath spoken,

we shall still wauer and our faith shal be no faith, which alone can rest in the authorite of God, and not of men.

2 The second verse conteineth his salutation, euen that which is common to him with Paul & the other Apostles wishing grace and peace to those vnto whom they write. And this they do, because it is the chiefe scope and principall ende of their ministery, to bring men againe into Gods fauour, and to be reconciled vnto him. Of this thinge speaketh S. Paul, 2. Cor. 5 chap. ver. 18. saying. All things are of God which hath reconciled vs to himselfe by Iesus Christ. And hath giuen vnto vs the ministerie of reconciliation, for God was in Christ, and reconcyled the worlde to himselfe, not imputing their sinnes vnto them: and hath committed to vs the word of reconciliation. Now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseeche you through vs: we pray you in Christe his stead, that you be reconciled to God. This being the chiefe end of their trauell, causeth them so earnestly to wish it for the people: and to bee so serious,

not

not onely in teaching them this generally, but also pointing out, as it were with the finger, the way to the same: and that not onelie in their doctrine, but also in their liues. Whosoeuer digresseth or casteth his eyes aside from this marke & ende of his ministery, ceaseth to bée the Minister of Christ. as for example, if hée preache the gospell to purchase renoume, estimation, wealth or ease to himselfe, and not to séeke this reconciliation betweene God and men, and to haue grace and peace multiplied vppon them, he may well sometimes preach the truth, but not truly.

Likewise, those parentes which set forth their children to learninge, with this minde: My sonne shall liue an easie and merie life, he shall get some liuings, promotions, & dignities in the Churche: do lay a corrupt and rotten foundation, and haue not learned this doctrine of the Apostle, and therefore the buildinge folowes agréeably: for the most, when they come to haue learning, not forgetting this lesson which they learned of their fathers, doe become grédie caters of

benefices and promotions, rather then carefull feeders of the flocke of Christe, But here it may be obiected, how the Apostle can wish that grace which is the free fauour of God, should be multiplied vpon them, seing that Gods loue and fauour doth not increase nor diminishe, but he loueth and fauoureth allwayes alike, being subiecte to no alteration or change. This may wel be answered, that Sainct Peter doeth not speake here of grace, as it is in it selfe in God towards men, but of their feeling the same, which groweth by degrees from lesse to greater: and because it is a thing so precious, the Apostle wisheth that it may be multiplied vpon them. He expresseth the meane to be the knowledg and acknowledging of God, and of Iesus Christ our Lord.

3 According as his diuine power hath giuen vnto vs all things that perteine vnto life and godlines through the acknowledging of him that hath called vs vnto glory and vertue.

This is fitly ioyned to the former verse

verse, to shewe that the abundance of grace and peace is not without cause required at our handes, as if the Apostle shoulde say, You are not to content nor to satisfie your selues with a scant measure of Gods giftes and graces, seeing that there is offered vnto you, & set forth in Christ, vnto whom you may resort as to a storehouse fully furnished with all treasures, all thinges which pertaine to life and godlinesse.

Secondly, we haue to obserue in this verse, when he saith that all thinges are giuen vnto vs by his diuine power, that here is nothing left in the worke of our saluation vnto our selues: so that it must nedes followe, that these which defend frée will, doe not speake with the same spirite which the Apostle doth here. For setting forth a contrary doctrine to this, it must nedes proceed from a contrary spirite. The Apostle doth not say here, that all these thinges which wee wante, throughe the weakenesse of our nature, shalbe supplied, but to shewe that there is nothing in vs at all, but that wee are quite stripte of all thinges which pertaine

to life and godlyneſſe. Hée ſpeaketh not of repairing or helping in ſome parte but of a whole and frée gifte in euerie part: when he ſaith without exception that all thinges are giuen vnto vs by the diuine power, which pertaine vnto life, and godlines: and ſo this doctrine doth chalenge all the praiſe and glory of our ſaluation to God alone.

Thirdly, it may be demanded why the Apoſtle ſhould ſay that all thinges are giuen vnto vs by the diuine power or Godheade of our Sauiour Chriſt, when it is manifeſt that we fetch all thinges from his manhode: and therefore hée ſaith in the firſt chap. of S. Iohn, verſe. 46 I am the bread of life: and againe in the 54. verſe of that ſame chapter, Hée that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blod, I will raiſe him vp in the laſt day: For my fleſhe is meate indéed, and my blode is drinke indéed: by thys it is manifeſt, that life is giuen vnto the worlde, by the manhode of Chriſte. The anſwere is eaſie, that Chriſte in his manhode is a creature, and therfore hath nothing of his owne: but whatſoe-

uer

uer is in him, as to bée the life of the woꝛlde, and the light of men, and to haue in him al the treaſures of wiſdom, this commeth from the diuine nature, which dwelleth in him bodily, as Saint Paule ſpeaketh. Nowe the cauſe why all theſe are put into the manhode of Chꝛiſte, is that from thence wée maye bée partakers of them: foꝛ ſo longe as they haue reſidence only in God, wée are ſo farre remoued from him, that by no meanes wée can appꝛoche oꝛ come néere vnto him, to dꝛawe out of him any dꝛop of the ſame. Therefoꝛe thoughe all thinges be giuen vs by this meanes: that GOD hath put them into the fleſhe of Chꝛiſte, and ſo is come downe néere vnto vs that wé may lay faſt hold of him: yet neuertheleſſe becauſe the pꝛopꝛietie of them remaineth ſtill in the diuine nature, the gifte of them is héere aſcribed vnto the power thereof.

Fourthly, we are to note in this verſe that the Apoſtle doeth bꝛiefly ſet downe the ende and ſomme of religion, and of all theſe giftes, when he

ſaith

faith, which pertaine to lyfe and godlinesse: for in these two wordes, vnto which the other two do answere, which are set downe in the latter ende of the verse, glory and vertue, all those giftes are conteined. For that which hee expressed first by life, here by glorie, that which before hee called godlynesse, here hee calleth vertue: they are as much as to say, eternall felicitie, and life with glory, and the way which we must passe throughe to the same, which is godlines and vertue. Here we are to take great heede, that wee doe not seuer or sunder those thinges which the Lorde himselfe hath so nerely coupled and linked together. And this admonishion is so much the more necessarie, because there are very many carnal professors and beastly abusers of christianitie, which doe seeme very willingly and gladly to imbrace ỹ promises of the Gospell, concerning redemption and eternall life purchased in Christe Iesus: and they make great boast that they looke for their parte in the same as well as any other, & yet they looke nothing at all to this godlines and vertue,

vertue, through which we must passe vnto it, for God hath not called vs, but as hée saith here, to glory and vertue: so that whomesoeuer the Lorde hath called to know him aright, and so to be made heires of eternall glory, he hath also garnished them with vertues and graces of the spirite of sanctification. Untill such time therefore, as there shall rise vp a newe Peter, which with contrary pen shall write a new contrary gospell, these men shall neuer assure them selues, nor yet perswade others that they shall euer come to the kingdome of God, seeing they go a quite contrarie way.

4 Whereby most great and precious promises are giuen vnto vs, &c. Now he sheweth by what meanes or by what instrumentes the diuine power doeth bestowe those gifts vpon vs, and the same are, as hée calleth them, most great and precious promises which are giuen vnto vs, whereby we are called to glory and vertue, as he speaketh in the former verse: these are called most great and precious, because the things which are offered vnto vs in the gospel of Christ, for greatnes

greatenes & dignity are incõparable: for what cã we seeke out to match with this that here is offered vnto vs: namely the remission of our sins in the bloud of his sonne, deliueraunce & frædome from the thraldome of Satan & power of darknes, that of damned creatures and children of his wrath, he hath giuẽ vs this high dignity to be his sonnes & daughters: & as S. Iohn saith, Reue. 1. Christ hath washed vs in his bloud, and made vs kinges and priests to god his father: what a change is this, from the lowest miserie, euẽ in the gulf of hell, to be lifted vp, to the highest dignitie, to be glorified with God in the kingdõ of heauẽ? Because therefore these thinges are the greatest & most honorable, S. Peter calleth the promises of the gospel, most greate & pretious. But wher fore doth the apostle ascribe all to the doctrine of the gospel: for when he saith, that by these we are made partakers of the diuine nature, he includeth all, because it is by the gospel that we are called home to the Lord: for although hée vtter his wil vnto vs in his law, yet therin he sheweth himselfe none otherwise vnto

vnto vs, but as a seuere iudge: we can see nothing there, but the dreadfull curse, & vengeance of eternall fire: his brightnes appeareth therein, but we be not able to beholde the same, but are daseled with the sight thereof, amazed & confounded, so that we cannot but runne from him, because there is nothing but that which is terrible. Cõtrariwise, in the Gospel he hath reuealed himselfe in the face of his sonne. where he sheweth an exceading glory, but with such fatherly loue & pitie, such abũdance of mercy, and swæte allurements, by which he calleth vs and draweth vs to himselfe: that here we are able to loke vpon him with open face; and here hys countenance is so chærefull, that the soule which hath once with the eye of faith sæne but a glimse thereof is so inflamed and rauished with desire of a nearer and fuller sight, that it can neuer bee satisfied. For this cause Saint Paule making comparison betwæne the ministerie of the Lawe and the ministerye of the Gospell. 2. Corinthians, 3 Termeth that the ministration of death, and the letter

which

which killeth: and this the ministration of the spirite, which giueth life. Which by the way also is to bee obserued, because there be among vs at this day many frãtike braines: namely those of the family of loue, which call the true and sound interpreting of the word the litterall sense, or the letter which killeth, & their owne grosse and foolish allegories the spirite: not knowing that S. Peter speaketh of the difference betweene the Lawe and the Gospel. Here also appeareth of what price and dignitie the gospell is: for who can set forth the worthinesse of this. Whẽ he saith, that by these promises we are made partakers of the diuine nature. We were indeed at the first created after the Image of God, and so partakers of his nature: but we lost all this with our first parents & in steede thereof we were made partakers of the diuelish nature, bearing his Image, and fulfillinge his lustes. Nowe by faith in the Gospell, this image is restored and built vp in vs. againe, whilest we receiue the spirite of sanctification ioyned with the same. If men did knowe, this first, that all happi-

nesse

nesse in men is to be made partakers of the nature of God, and to communicate with him: and then that this is wrought only by the Gospel: men woulde not so lothsomely despise it, and preferre euery light commoditie, and trifling pleasure before it: men woulde not seeke to disgrace and slander it: men would not be so sone wearie in hearing of it nor thinke euery houre ten, while they be at it. Finally men vnlesse they were mad men, would not as they doe now almost euery where, thinke themselues best at ease when it is furthest from them: for who would willingly throw himselfe headlong to destruction? who would so play the mad beastes, as to thrust God from them, & refuse to be made partakers of his heauenly nature? which all they doe that haue as yet felt no swætnesse in the Gospell, or at least haue so little tasted it, that it can scarse obtaine cold loue at their hands. But there nædeth somwhat to be said vpon the phrase of speach which S. Peter vseth, for it is somwhat hard to some, & as it was in olde time fouly abused by hereticks, so is it wickedly at this

day peruerted by the louely Family, which holding this doctrine, that men are defiled, and God is hominified, as their lãguage is, meaninge that the very eſſence and ſubſtance of God is tranſfuſed into men, and his ſubſtance & theirs mingled together, take greate holde of this, that the Apoſtle ſayth, we are made partakers of the diuine nature. But you ſhal ſe that euery ſimple man may eaſily confute them: if we aſke what the nature of an hoꝛſe is, wil a man anſwere that he is made of the earth? then a hoꝛſe and a man are bothe of one nature, foꝛ man is alſo made of the earth: it is manifeſt thẽ that none is ſo fœliſh but he will confeſſe, that when we ſpeake of nature of any thing, we meane not the ſubſtãce but the qualities and properties: euen ſo in this place we muſt nẽdes graunt, that by the diuine nature in this place is nothinge elſe ment, but that there ſhould be ſuche a nature and ſuch qualities in men as may carrye a reſemblance of the diuine nature: as foꝛ example, god is holy we muſt be holy, he is pure, gœd, iuſt, gracious, bountifull, louing, & merciful,

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all these and such like must be also in vs. we shal also come to be partakers of life of glory, of ioye, of happinesse, and eternitie, and so in a nœrer sorte to bee partakers of the diuine nature. What are all those now the better, which haue so receiued the precious promises, that their qualities are euen as agreable to the nature of GOD, as light is with darknes, or Heauen with Hell, or Christe with Beliall? Sith so manye shamefull and beastly sinnes dowe and raigne in them, which are so many partakinges of the Diuelish nature, let them for shame denie that they haue ought wherein they communicate with GOD, in anye thing sauing a bare profession. Then what is it which maketh a good man? The promises of the Gospell. what is it which bringeth life and saluation? The Gospel. Who are they which haue imbraced the promises, & haue the true and liuely faith? The holy. Who are they whom God hath called to life eternall, to be those whome hee loueth as children, bearing his Image? The pure and vndefiled

in the laſt clauſe of this verſe he ſheweth his meaning very plainely, In that, ſaith hée, yée flie the corruptions which are in the world through luſt: this is the way to bée made partakers of the diuine nature, for as corruptions and filthie defilinges, the more they cleaue vnto vs, the more they ſeparate vs from the Lord, ſo contrariwiſe, the more a man doeth flie and eſchewe them, ſo much the nérer hée doeth approche vnto God, who is the fountaine of all puritie. We are here to note that S. Peter maketh all corruption and naughtineſſe in the world to ſpringe out of concupiſcence, or as it is vſually tranſlated, luſt: where we muſt learne firſt, what this concupiſcence or luſt is, which is héere ſaid to bée as it were the ſeate of ſinne: and indéede it is the rote and fountaine, out of which groweth and floweth al euil that is committed in the world, either in thought, worde, or déede. To be ſhort, this is that which is forbidden in the tenth cõmãdemẽt, whé he ſaith. Thou ſhalt not couet. At leaſt ſo much of it is forbidden there, as pertaineth to the ſecond table, that is

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the rote & fountaine of all euill against men, for there is nothing recited in the same last commandement, but towarde men: & when our Sauiour Christ setteth forth the summe of the first table, hée saith: it is to loue the Lorde with all the heart, with all the soule, &c. Nowe where the whole heart is required, there concupiscence must nédes be forbidde: but ye wil say what is it: wherin doth it consist: It is not in déeds, wordes, nor thoughts, but a more close & inwarde sickness bred, as they say, in the bones, the natural blot & spot of originall sinne, which we haue by inheritance, from our first parentes & bring with vs out of our mothers womb, out of which al euil thoughtes & desires do arise in vs. S. James in the first cap. of of his Epistle maketh it the womb & mother which conceyueth & bringeth forth sinne: Let no man (saith hé) when he is tempted, say: I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with euill neither tempteth he any mã, but euery one is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own concupiscence, & is intised: then lust when it hath conceiued, bringeth forth

sinne, & sinne whē it is finished bringeth forth death. The first thing we haue here to note in this doctrine is this, that all corruptiō is of our selues, not coming from any outward cause: it is true that Satā is an instrument, & as it were the bellowes to stirre and kindle in vs the lustes of sinne, and beareth a very great stroke in the matter: but if it were not for this concupiscence that is in vs, hee coulde not bring his matters to passe: the prouocations and allurementes of wicked men are so many meanes to driue vs and draw vs into sinne, but yet the cause is in our selues. A chiefe point to bee obserued, that wee may learne to condemne our selues when wee haue done amisse, and not after ỳ maner of men, which loke when they haue faulted howe they may disburden themselues, and be discharged of the blame. and therefore they will either crie out of the Deuill, as thoughe hee, as they say, ought them a shame, or else they will say, woe worth such or such that euer I knew them, if it had not beene for them, I should not haue done thus. The Pro-

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phet Dauid when he had committed murther and adulterie, being reproued by Nathan, although he knewe right wel that the Deuil was a greate furtherer in the matter: likewise he might haue thought vpon the fonde dealing of the woman, which so indiscretly washed hir selfe in such a place as others might se hir: yet he letteth these goe, and to the ende he may wholly and fully condemne himselfe, he loketh home to the welspring of all this foule and beastly sinne, and sayth, Behold I was borne in wickednesse, and in sinne hath my mother conceiued me: as if he should say, O Lord, I cannot seeke any way to be excused: for all this rebellion against thee is conceiued and bredde in mine owne corrupt brest, I brought the rote of it from my mothers wombe. This is a good lesson for vs to learne: for so longe as we do not knowe it, but like partiall and corrupt Iudges go about to excuse our selues, & to rid our hands of that we haue commited, we shall neuer come to any sincere repẽtãce. Further we are here to obserue in this place, that al corrupti-

comming from this lust, if wee will repent in deede, wee must begin here. For if they bee chaunged onely in their outwarde deedes and wordes, and this inwarde sicknes not healed, they haue gained nothing, no more then a man which would destroy a tree, and doth no more then lop and shred of certaine boughes and twigges, leauinge the stumpe and roote behind: for so long as this doth liue in them, they may well seeme in the eyes of men, to be very greate conuerts, if they be ignorant idiotes, & are become such as haue gotten some skill and knowledge: from drunkardes, ruffians adulterers, and such lyke, they become sober and modest, and of good behauiour: as this may be done before men, and yet the heart nothing altered before God: for there bee many causes which may moue men to seeme outwardlye to bee godly, when the hearte within is fraught with loathsome lustes, and full of rotten corruptions, which make men still altogither abhominable before God. To be short therefore a man shall neuer rightly iudge of him selfe whe-

whether hée haue repented, vnlesse hée looke to the bottome of this sore, that it may be healed. The greatest multitude of men being as blind as beetles in this point, imagin that repentance, is a very light & easie thing, which they can haue when they list: when a man of wisedome saith this, that here lieth so déepe a matter, that here be rotes which are hard to be pulled vp, he is moued to be the more carefull, least he deceiue himselfe. Looke therefore euerye man to his thoughts, for by them is the trial made: if the thoughts be chãged, & the inwarde desires altered, so that of prophane and worldly, they are become holy and heauenly: then he may boldly say, I haue a newe hearte, and there is a right spirite renued in me, I haue repented, I haue not played the hypocrite, I féele an vpright heart toward God. I féele the corrupt fountaine stopped, so that the filthie matter, and stinking mudde doeth not boyle foorth as it did. It may also bée demaunded héere, whether this lustie bée not a sinne or a corrupti-

on of it selfe, because S. Peter saith, that corruption resteth in it. The place which I alleaged out of the 51. Psalme, doeth proue it to be a sinne: also it may be proued out of the fifth to the Romanes, Where S. Paule proueth that infantes haue sinne, because they are subiect to death, which is the rewarde of sinne, although as he saith, they sinne not after the similitude of the trasgression of Adam. Therefore if we had none other but this, it were enough to condemne vs, and vtterly to cast vs away. Let vs neuer cease therefore, vntil we feele a change in our selues, euen in this secrete infection, for otherwise we shall neuer bee able to flie the corruptions whiche are in the worlde, or as S. James speaketh in the first Chapter of his Epistle, to keepe our selues vnspotted of the worlde, so longe as we carie the corrupt world in our own breste, neither shal our religion be pure, for thus it is saide: if any man among you seemeth religious and refraineth not his tongue, but deceiueth his owne hearte, this mans religion is vaine. Pure religion and vnde-

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filed befoze God, euen the father is this,
to viſite the fatherleſſe and widowes
in their diſtreſſe, and to kéepe
himſelfe vnſpotted of the
woꝛlde

The ſeconde Sermon vpon the 5.6.and 7.verſes.

5 Therefore giue euen all diligence therunto, ioine moreouer vertue with your faith: & with vertue knowledge:
6 And with knowledge, temperance: and with temperance, patience: and with patience, godlines:
7 And with godlines, brotherly kindneſſe: and with brotherly kindnes, loue.

AND hereunto giue all diligence, &c. He hath declared in the former verſes, among other chiefe matters this one eſpecially, to howe great holineſſe and pureneſſe through ſanctification, we be called: which was chiefly expreſſed in theſe wordes that by them yee may bee made partakers of the diuine nature, in that yee flie the corruption which is in the world through luſt: vnto this now he ioyneth an exhortation, requiring at their handes not only to put to their diligence, but alſo, as hee ſaith, euen all diligence

ligence. For as it is the greatest and chiefest thing which we are to loke after: so there is required at our handes, to giue our principall care and studie thereunto. this equitie must easily be granted, that if we cannot obteine or get the thinges of this life, which are small in comparison, vnlesse we put to our diligence, for God will haue it to bee so, that then of good right loke, for how much heauenly things excede in dignitie the earthly, so much must the care and diligence bestowed vpon them excede. How far almost are all men from this doctrine, both in practise and iudgment: first, when wee see the exceeding trauel & paines which they sticke not willingly to bestowe, in gettting ỹ beggerly trash of this world, either riches or honours: they will ride and run, early and late, by night and by day, by sea and by land, winter and sommer: wearing out their bodies, almost pine and starue themselues with hunger and beating their braines with as great diligence as can be possible, but when it commeth to these things, which S Peter speaketh, as things of no price, they passe by

by them, in ſuch wiſe, that they are here euen as slouthfull and careleſſe, as they are diligent in the other. For iudgment in this behalfe, if a man talke with theſe worldly men, they will ſhew their minde and opinion: aſke them why they be ſo careful for theſe worldly things, their anſwere is readie: we ſhall otherwiſe come ſhort of them, and goe with out them: & why do ye not ſeeke as faſt for heauenly thinges, they be the greateſt: they be indeede the greateſt, but we commit that to God, we will not meddle with that. Thus they ſhift off the care of godlines, as though god did not require it at their handes: neuer hearing of this which, S. Peter requireth: we muſt take heede of this, giuing eare to god, who teacheth vs this leſſon by the holy Apoſtle: for if we let this paſſe we are moſt miſerable: here alſo when we are warned to giue all diligence, appeareth plainely howe harde a thing it is to flye from corrupte luſtes: for if it were an eaſie thing to be done, leſſe diligence might ſerue: but ſinne, cleaueth neere and ſticketh faſt in vs, & is not eaſily ſhaken of: it is deepely rooted

fed: so that vnlesse we digge vere dæpe, wee are sure to leaue the rotes still behinde, which will growe & spring againe as fast as before, yea oftentimes seeming to be dead, they suddainly reuiue: so that wee are set awoorke while we liue here without any intermission, to be still toyling to pull vp theese weedes, the ground is so ranke, that in a very short time it will be wholy ouergrowen. Therefore such as despise the meanes which God hath appointed, or vse them ouer negligently, must needes haue their heart ouergrowne with these stinking weeds of lust and concupiscence: and so if euer there be any good seede in them, as good motions or inclinations to feare God, they are by and by choked, so that they can bring forth no fruite, or at the least no ripe and timely fruite.

But heere may be obiected, that this agreeth not with the former saying, that the diuine power hath giuen vs all thinges which pertaine to life and godlinesse, there hee ascribeth all to God, and taketh all from vs, heere he seemeth to giue somewhat vnto our diligence,

diligence, and so to establishe frée will in vs. We must answere here ẏ God worketh al in al, & alone striketh the stroke, yet he doth not worke in vs, as the carpenter or mason worketh vpon the log and the stone, which haue no féeling of that which is done vpon them, and therfore nothing of them is required: but we haue a will in vs & reason, which of thē selues being corrupt, doe nothing but hinder this worke, vntill such time as god hath fashioned them anew: we haue appetites & affections in vs, but of them selues méere rebels: these he tameth and subdueth: so that this worke of God in vs, is not without a féeling of it, for he moueth vs to wil, to desire, to sorow, to reioyce & suche like, so that our diligence is required, because he worketh in none but he doth make them diligent: here is still then that which God doth bestow vpon vs, and not that which we haue of our selues. By this place al those are answered, which cloke and defend themselues in their naughtines and slouth in the seruice of God, after this manner: we haue that which God hath giuen vs,

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all men are not alike godlye euery man cannot dos as you doe: when their own heart and conscience doth tel euery of them the contrary, saying, thou art carelesse, and negligent, thou hast as muchas thou desirest: for God doth increase all gifts and graces in those which vse al diligence in seeking after him. Let vs learn therefore, brethren, to put in practise all those thinges which are here taught, to giue greater diligence, and to beate our braine more earnestly about heauenly things, then about these earthly, to labour & trauel more for godlynesse, then for treasures and riches. Which if we do, we shall fele increase of strength to cast out corrupt lustes: although not so much as faine we would, yet God being true we shall haue so much that we can not faile nor misse of our desire. It folowth, ioyne moreouer vertue with your fayth, &c. Saint Peter knoweth what babes we be, how vnable to guide our steppes in the pathes of godlynesse, and that maketh him not onely to moue and perswade to godlynesse, but euen as it were taking vs by the hande, and teaching vs

howe to treade euery steppe, hée rehearseth particularly the thinges wherein wée are to trauel, when he saith, Ioyne moreouer with your faith, vertue, with vertue knowledge, with knowledge, tẽperaunce, with temperance, patience, with patience, godlynes, and with godlynesse, brotherly kindnesse, and with brotherly kindenesse loue.

Faith here is set in the first place, vnto which all the other must be ioyned, because without it we can not by any meanes please God: it doth iustifie vs before god alone, but yet it doth not go alone, neither is it deade and fruitlesse: for these things doe accompany the same. In the next place therefore he coupleth vnto this vertue, which is generally put for all the fruites of faith, and all the duties of a godly life. These can not be wanting, but by and by it must nédes follow, that the fayth is a dead faith, not able to iustifie vs before God, nor to giue life: it cannot indéede be rightly termed any other then a shadowe or dumbe picture of fayth, which may carry some shewe

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and colour of that which it resembleth. Euen as we se some painter so skilful that he can cast such colours in painting fire, that at the first blush it might make a man iudge it to be fire in deede: but if a man holde his hande to it, to fele for some heate, and to make triall by the effectes, a childe will be able to iudge easily, that it is but a dead image, because the effectes are wanting. Euen so there be very many men, as cunning as any painter, to make a shew of faith, through great bragges and vaunts, that God is their God, & that they all put their whol trust in him, that they looke to be saued as wel as the best, yea though but a few, yet they hope to be of the number of those. Let vs loke therfore that we be not deceiued here, let not the outwarde appearance beguile vs, but let vs come to the true trial, if there be as much vertue in their life, as there was heate in the forsaid fire, then knowe that it is euen as good a faith, as that is a fire. For ye may ye as well seperate fire from the heate thereof, as faith from good and

godly vertues, which are the fruits thereof. What shall then be said of all those from whom do flow so many filthy sins, that scarce at any time doeth appeare in them, so much as a shadowe of vertue? they cannot deceiue any wise man, much lesse shall they bee able to deceiue God. Let euery one therefore take heede that he deceiue not himselfe, to thinke that he is richly indued with faith, when he is so poore in vertue, for if the latter abound, wee are sure the former doeth also abounde. For wee must trie our faith by our vertues. Next he willeth to ioyne knowledge vnto vertue. These three are generall, faith, vertue, and knowledge: and are so linked togither, that they cannot be sundered. For faith is not a blind fantasie which man doeth imagine of his owne braine, but it is begun in the right knowledge of Gods will, and increaseth and groweth by the same: it is also the rule and square to measure and guide al vertue by: for we must not thinke, that that is good which seemeth so vnto our reason, but that which God in his reuealed will hath called good; vnlesse there-

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fore vertue did growe in vs, wée cannot haue it, before we become skilfull, and haue learned it out of the woorde of God. For this cause the Apostle moving these excellent men to increase in godlinesse, sheweth them the way, when hée willeth them to increase in knoweledge.

Now if wée marke well, what manner of men they were to whome hée wrote: namely, no babes nor younge-linges in the Gospell, for hée said they had obteined like precious faith with him, and afterwarde in this Chapter hée saieth, they did knowe and were stablished in the present truth: wée shall easily perceiue howe this may stop the mouthes of many, which holde blinde errors. First of all, of those which affirm that ignorance is the mother of deuotion: if godlinesse and vertue be the true deuotion, then it must néedes followe, that their doctrine is false and diuelishe, séeing we are charged to ioine vnto our vertue knowledg: it is true if they mean Popishe deuotion, for they coulde ne-

ner haue kept men in awe, to be zealous of their religion, and to seeke for that at the handes of men, which God alone doeth giue, vnlesse they had kept them in blindnesse and ignorance: and therefore they take a wise way, to keepe the people from knowing the worde, which so soone as it breake forth againe, disclosed all their falshood and treacherye, in so muche that neither good nor badde almost, haue any deuotion vnto them. Secondly of those, which although they bee not ranke Papistes, yet haue in them still a smacke and sauour of Popish principles, and therefore like soles are also enemies vnto knowledge. For thus they speake. It were no matter if there were lesse preaching, I thinke the people be the worse for it, there is knowledge euen enough, what should laye men bee troubled to learne, or to seeke for the knowledge of the Scriptures let them tende their worke, and looke to their occupations, and learne to bee quiet, and to deale honestlye: against these poore blinde beastes, (for

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I may vſe no gentle ſpéech) wée are to reaſon out of thys place, firſt that all men, knowe they neuer ſo muche, are héere commaunded to increaſe in knowledge, to the ende they may increaſe in faith and godlineſſe. Secondly let them conſider to what manner of men Saint Peter wrote, namelye to powre and riche men, women and children, to all ſortes, and to be ſhort, to as many as woulde haue Faith and vertue, and ſo come to life and glorye, and therefore as well the powre ploughman, as the greate Clarke is commanded to increaſe his knowledge out of Gods booke: Thirdlye, they muche ouerſhote themſelues, when they woulde beare them in hande, that knowledge, which is the guider of vertue, ſhoulde bée the cauſe of vice. Naye, if wæ wipe our eyes, and loke better to the matter, wæ ſhall ſée, that there is a floude of ignorance, which hath almoſt ouerwhelmed all, and in many which ſéeme to knowe very muche, if they were ſounded to the

bottome, there should be found in them grosse ignorance and palpable darkenes: and so indæde the true cause of all foule sinnes, which abound at this day among vs, and flow euen as a swelling Sea, is the want of true knowledg. This ignorannce hath taken such rote, that all they which haue made prøfe, will confesse with mee, that our time is like the time of the prophete Esaie, 28. who hauing laboured himselfe as it were out of breathe in teaching, and seeing so small profiting, beeing commanded of the Lord still to goe to his businesse, burseth forth into these speeches: whome shall I teach knowledge? whome shall I make for to vnderstande? them that are waned from the milke, and drawne from the brestes? for precepte must bee vppon precept, precept vppon precept, line vnto line, line vnto line a little here and a little there. And in another place he saieth, the worde of the Lorde was like a sealed booke, if bee come to one, saying. Read this I pray you, he maketh answere, I cannot reade, to another that

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can reade, hée anſwereth, I cannot, for it is ſealed.

Furthermore, let theſe ſélly creatures learne of this place to bée aſhamed of that, wherein they ſéeme after a ſorte to glory, when they vſe to ſay, as they thinke in defence of themſelues, we bée without ſkill, wée haue no knowledge, wée be poore honeſt men, wée haue no learning: it is as much as to ſay, we haue no faith, we haue no vertue, we haue no godlineſſe: for wée be plainely taught héere that faith, vertue, and knowledge, muſt increaſe and growe vp together. Let vs al print this leſſon déepely in our mindes, that it may driue vs to make haſte to come out of our ignorance, and to ſéeke apace after knowledge. Let vs take héede of flattering our ſelues as ſome other doe, which hauing gotten ſome ſkill, or at leaſte thinke that they haue, ſette bepe light by the publike teaching of the worde, they doe excuſe themſelues after this ſorte, I thanke God I am not of the ignorante ſorte, nor of the meaneſt iudgement, I know ſome what,

let them hunte after preaching that néede, it is very good for them: as for mée, I am sufficiently acquainted with the matter alreadie. This kinde of men are harde to deale withall, because they bée wise in their owne conceite, and not in the Lorde: for if they had once but eué a little tasted of true knowledge of the sweetenesse and power therof, they woulde neuer haue enoughe of the first sponeful: if they had an healthful stomacke, they could neuer be brought so sone to loath and as it were to vomit vp againe, so hollsome sustenaunce. But let vs learne here, that when our knowledge is growne to bée neuer so great, because we know but in part, and we know nothing as we ought to know, as Saint Paule saith, euen then we are to giue all diligence, to ioine to our vertue knowledge, vnlesse when wée haue begunne and proceeded so farre, ỹ wée mind to fall backe againe. This place doth plainely set forth the wofull and miserable state of those which bée without teaching, or haue it in so scanty

a measure, that they come almost to no vnderstanding: they are merrie and thinke al is wel, and thinke themselues best, when they are leaste dealt withal; but iudge righteous iudgemente, which the Lorde by his Apostle teacheth vs to iudge, and wee shall see that their myrth is nothing else, but a madde laughter, euen in the middest of feareful and horrible destruction. vnto knowledge ioyne temperaunce, &c. Or continence, for so the worde whiche S. Peter vseth, may be translated. But what doth he meane, hauing bidden vs to ioyne vertue with faith againe, as though he had forgotten himselfe, to expresse certaine seueral kinds of vertues, which he wil haue vs to ioyne to the former, when as indeede the word Vertue conteineth them al. We may not thinke but that he is very well aduised, and that he knoweth with whome he hath to doe, what babes and children wee are which must not haue meate set before vs in grosse to be our owne Caruers, but it must bee minced to our handes, wee

wee muſt alſo bee feede as it weere by ſpoonefuls. For this cauſe he did not content himſelfe to exhort in generall vnto vertue, but alſo to name and pointe vs out certaine chiefe braunches, which wee muſt eſpecially labour about: for vnleſſe God ſhould deale with vs in this wiſe, ſo vaine are wee, that we ſhould wander and roue, as it were in a wide fielde, and neuer come nigh the marke, or at leaſt in loking after ſome one vertue or other, forget and let goe the chiefe and principall. For wee ſe many that can rolle in their mouth the name of vertue and godlineſſe, and nothing almoſt but vertue, vertue: as though they woulde perſwade men, that their garden did growe full of ſuch herbes, but when wee come to this particular examination, to loke for this vertue and that, in ſteede of theſe ſweete herbes, wee ſhall finde nothinge but ſtinking weedes. Heere is a great parte of our diligence and wiſedome: therefore, that when wee ſtudie for vertue and godlineſſe, and when wee cal vpon the Lord for gifts, we ſearch out euery part, and braunche, leaſte wee be ouer-

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ſæne in ſome ſpeciall pointe, and leaſte while wée ſéeke to increaſe one vertue, another decay in vs, for that ſhall come to paſſe, if we caſt not our eies diligently on euery ſide, and ſo oftentimes we rather loſe then gaine, rather goe backwarde then forwarde. Out of the negligence in this pointe of doctrine, or for want of knowledge in it, men growe into ſecuritie, as very little contenteth them: yea though it be but euen ſome ſkiw of vertue, and ſlouthfully they ſhunne of the matter: a thing greatly to be taken héed vnto. Becauſe out of all queſtion, it is that which hath cauſed diuers forwarde men, in continuance of time, as it were gathering ruſt, to become ſlacke: if we haue deſire therfore to continue, let vs learne to put this leſſon in practiſe. But why doeth he will to ioyne temperance or continence with knowledge, it ſhould ſéeme that he had no regarde of anie affinitie in matching theſe thinges togither: for temperance is conuerſant about pleaſures and delightes. Yes verily wée ſhall plainly ſée, that there is great cauſe for which he ioyneth euery

ry one of these vertues together. And first to beginne with this, ye are to note that cõtinencie is not conuersant alone, about the delightes of the bodie, but also of the minde: so that in seeking knowledge, which we must doe very eagerly, we are to take heed of these extreames which are contrary to a continent mind, eyther to bee so wauering, that euery puffe do driue vs from the manifest truth or else on the other side to be so stiffe, and so wilfully wedded to our owne iudgement, that we will stande in defence of that whiche we haue once liked, and not admit any reason to the contrary: both these are contrary to a continent minde: and both of themenemies to true knowledge. Therefore we are warned here in our diligent searche for knowledge, to take heede that when we haue learned the truth, we continue stedfast and vnmoueable in it, not to be tossed to and fro as some vnstable mindes are, who when they haue beene taught the truth, the least doubt that is raysed against it, causeth them by & by to shake,

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and to feare whether they be in the right way or no: also we must take heede of that stiffenesse, which causeth some to speake when it were better for them to heare, & to be heard aloft, when a lower voyce might serue them better: far from the counsel of S. Iames who willeth vs to be swift to heare, & slow to speake. Let vs be sure our knowledge be wel grounded, before we setle our selues to continue in it: least in stede of heapinge vp golde, we fil our chestes with nothinge but drosse. Also we must beware, that we bende our studie for the knowledge of these poyntes which serue to increase godlines, and true edifying. For many seeke for knowledge, but their vayne brayne doth carry them to seeke after curious questions, and to let passe those thinges, which shoulde doe them most good: and this is a sore and grieuous sickenesse in men, as the questions they commonly moue, doe shewe. Hee addeth, To temperance ioyne patience. This also may seeme to be somewhat straunge, but if we looke well vnto it,

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we then shal perceiue the meaning more playnely: patience is not only requisite in those which haue receiued the profession of the gospel, to beare and indure all persecutions & afflictions, which oftentimes are so raging, that (except wee haue our harts wel staied, and seasoned with patience) we shal be driuen to forsake, and to forsweare our knowledge: but also it is very requisite to be well armed and fenced with it, when we shall haue to do with those which are absurd and grosse, and therefore it is as a dagger to a mans harte, to heare all their blockish reasons against the worde, to see how senceless they are, when the pure truth is layde before them: Likewise their spiteful railinges, & scœringe mockes, which they will vse: their bold abusinge of Gods worde, their arrogant presumption, which causeth them to prattle very fast, euen they knowe not what: or else we shall be hurled hither and thither vpon rockes, and make shipwrack of our mildenesse: and so marre and disgrace the good cause, which wee haue in hand. For wicked men will

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iudge al to proceede of rancor and anger: and ascribe all to choller, and so by this meanes there is procured some dishonor to God: who should greatly be honored, if we could mekely (as the Apostle willeth) instruct those which are contrary minded, prouing if God at any time wil giue them repentance, to come out of the snare of the deuill, of whome they be holden captiue, to doe his will: & so to stop their mouthes, that they cannot be able to answere. The want of this vertue often times bringeth greate inconuenience to the conference of brethren, which should bringe together (as it were into one heape) whatsoeuer euery one hath gleaned by himselfe, that so the one might supply the want of the other: but the impatience of some is such, that greate inconuenience doth growe thereby. To conclude this matter, seinge troubles are alotted vnto vs, & sufferings for the truth, & that we are subiect to so many reproches, railinges, tauntes, & mocks at the handes of absurd & euil men: who soeuer loketh to walke in the way of knowledge, he must seeke to possesse his

soule in patience. It followeth, with patience godlines, &c. A man may demand what maner of order is here vsed, in willing vs to ioyne godlines to patience, & then to godlines, brotherly kindnesse: is not godlines the whole or the general, & these brãches are members of it? True it is that this worde is often vsed generally to comprehende all goodnesse: but in this place, it comprehendeth but the first table of the lawe, wherein wee are willed to be deuout or zealous: a verye necessary caueat to beware that wee doe not become so patient, that we forget to be zealous in the Lords quarrel: it is as if S. Peter shoulde haue said: I woulde not haue you so meeke, as to beare and put vp al, I would haue you withal to be hotte in Gods quarrell, forget not that. For many vnder a colour of a meeke patience, doe couer the want of religion, for if God bee dishonoured, his truth defaced, his seruants slaundered they can heare and see, and yet bee as meeke as a Lambe: but if themselues bee touched yee shall see them play the Lions, and of luke warme to become

fire

fire hotte, this therefore is no patience which wanteth godlynesse. We must learne then, bothe with patience, and mǽkenes, to deale in the lords matters, & also with feruēt Zeale: least in stǽd of this excellent vertue of patience, which was commended vnto vs, there be nothing but a prophane vngodlynes and an irreligious mildnesse, in which at this day moe do offend then through impatience: for these Atheists haue this as an excuse very redily. Are we not commanded to be gentle and soft? Is it not our duety to maintaine loue, and charitie with our neighboures? Indǽde they bǽ great swearers, and somtime they vse to speake against gods word: if they be awry, I thinke they shall answere for thēselues, if we should gainesay, or sǽme to reproue them, they woulde not take it wel, therefore I thinke good not to disquiet them. Here is nowe wonderfull patience, these are very godly and charytable persons, yea euen a treacherie towardes GGD and men. For is there any of them, which beinge slaundered with some foule crime, whereby

they ſhould receiue greate iniurie, or be ſpitefully rayled vppon, if ſome of their nere friendes ſitte by and holde their tongues, when they knowe they be iniuried, that cannot by and by fele and ſay, this was colde friendſhip, that they could not haue dealt ſo vnlouingly towardes their friendes, by whome ſoeuer they ſhould haue heard them ſo abuſed, they could not haue held their tongues? Then belike God nor his truth are none of their deare friendes, that they can put vp ſuch iniury done towards him. There is plentie of this patience in all places, but godlyneſſe cannot be ſuffered to come nere, for he is a breake peace and a very vnpleaſaunt fellow, he is ouer rough and preciſe, and ouer-captious, there was good neighbourhod and friendſhippe before he came, they could be merry together, and bee in vnity, without any iarre: had it not bene better to vſe gentleneſſe and patience, then to haue this broyle? for there is nothing better than loue, and where that is not, ther is nothing good. O miſerable dayes, this is the good loue now among men, that they

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cannot loue one another, but they muſt hate God, to haue peace and concorde with men to bee at odds with God, for mens ſake, to put vp the diſhonoring of his name, not to continue in patience, vnleſſe Godlineſſe be wanting. The vngodly world, and lewde nature that is in men, taketh occaſion to accuſe godly Zeale, vnder this pretence: and to finde fault with the preaching of the worde, becauſe, ſay they, it ſetteth men at ſtrife But we muſt learn in this place to ioine godlineſſe with our patience, for otherwiſe we ſhall be founde to be nothing els but irreligious and prophane dogges: althoughe wee pretende loue neuer ſo much. The time wil not ſuffer to handle the reſt, which remaineth in this text. Let vs remember that which hath beene ſaid, & giue all diligence to purſue theſe excellent vertues, that ſo wee may approue our ſelues to be right Chriſtians, and loke for the bleſſed hope promiſed in Jeſu Chriſt.

The third Sermon.

7 And with godlines, brotherly kindnes, & with brotherly kindnes loue.
8 For if these things be with you and abound, they will make you that ye shall not be idle, nor vnfruiteful, in the knowledge of our Lord Iesus Christ.
9 For he that hath not these things is blind and seeth not a farre of, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sinnes.

AND with godlines brotherly kindnes, &c. We haue hard allreadie, that with our faith must be ioyned vertue or godly deedes, which it cannot be without, if it be a true faith, with vertue wee are commanded to ioyne knowledge, which may be a guide therunto, our knowledge must goe with temperance, with this must come patience, & therevnto must be ioyned godlines There remaine yet two branches of these speciall vertues about which wee are to trauell: the first of these is brotherly loue or kind-

kindneſſe, which muſt be yoked with godlines: as I ſaid, that this godlines he ſpeaketh of, is referred to the firſt table of the law, reſpecting God and his religion, that wee bee ſound and zealous in the ſame, and not as thoſe which are for al times, and al religions, and therefore care not what be ſaid againſt religion, beeing very belly gods and Atheiſts: ſo this is referred to the ſecond table, ſhewing what we owe vnto men. This is very fitly, and neceſſarily added, for as there be many, which regarding men onely, how to pleaſe, and not to grieue or offende them, altogether forgetting their dutie towards the Lord God, and wholy ſhutting him out, as though their chief care ſhould be of men, let paſſe godlines: ſo there be ſome that offend on the other ſide, which loking alwayes ſo high, as to haue reſpecte to the Lord and his truth, to be earneſt and firie in that, ouerloke men, forgetting the duties which they owe vnto them, the holy Apoſtle meeteth with this miſchief, and telleth vs that we muſt ſo loue God, that we alſo loue men: ioyne, ſaith

hée, to your godlineſſe, brotherlye kindeneſſe: for vnleſſe this be ioyned, and goe with our Zeale of Gods worde it is no true godlineſſe, although wée bée neuer ſo ſound in iudgement and ſéeme to bée as hotte as Moyſes or Elias, yea euen to be ſwalowed vp with burning Zeale: for it doeth not proceéde from Gods ſpirite, who doth alſo worke the loue towardes men, whereſoeuer he goeth: but it doeth proceéde of ſome corrupte cauſe, as of vaine glorye, or ſelfe loue, and ſuch like, and deſerueth not indéede to bée called godly deuotion, no more then the true faith can bée without vertue, or deſerueth to bée called ought ſaue a ſhadowe, or Image of faith, if it bée without good workes: but it is a bitterneſſe, which reſembleth the true Zeale, which doth euermore carrie with it a loue, and care towardes men. True it is that to be zealous in ſpirite is a ſingular and ſpeciall gift of God, and they which be without it are but brutiſh, & ſenceleſſe creatures, not knowing God, nor howe precious his glory is yet this muſt be loked vnto in euery one of vs, whether we

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beare a louing affection toward our bre-thren or no: for if we loue God, we muſt néeds loue men, which beare his Image. If we delyght in the word God, this is one chiefe point of doctrine which is taught in it, that we be louing and kynd vnto men. Therfore as Saint Paule 1. Cor. 13. sheweth, that very excellent giftes doe not profit without loue: ſo likewiſe in this place we be taught, that if wée woulde ſéeme to bée godly, and haue not loue, it is nothing worth. Let euery man therefore lay this doctrine to his hearte: that he muſt be earneſt in the cauſes of the Lorde, zealous in religion, preferring God and his truth before all men, whoſoeuer, and whatſoeuer they be: but yet withal that he muſt loke downe vnto men, rendring vnto them their due alſo, this doing he may beholde he is in the right way. Vnto this brotherly kindnes we be charged to ioyne loue. It may bée héere demanded againe, what manner of ſpéeche this is, which the Apoſtle doeth vſe, for is not brotherly kindneſſe or brotherly

loue,

loue, as the word doth signifie, and loue all one: we muste be farre from thinking Saint Peter to deale with so little heede, as to wil vs to ioyne the very same thing to the same: wee must therfore seeke a difference betweene these two. We may take this difference, either that the first of these doth expresse what wee owe towards the Godly, who be chiefly called the brethren, and the latter what we owe vnto all, both good and bad: or els the former doth signifie the inwarde affection of loue, and the latter, the outwarde practise of the same: for the doctrine in both these is needfull to be opened. If we take then the former sense, we be willed to ioine with our loue towards the godly and faithfull brethren (whome we ought chiefly, and more dearely to fauour,) a loue also which may reache euen ouer all, good and bad, friend and foe. This Saint Paule teacheth when he willeth vs to doe good to all men, but especially to them which are of the householde of faith. So that we muste acknowledge our selues bounde, in some sort, euen to the wicked: according as our

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Sauiour doth teach, Math. 5. Bleſſe thē which curſe you, pray for them which hate and perſecute you: and Saint Paule ſaith, Rom. 12. If thine enimie hunger, fæde him: if he thirſt, giue him drinke. Well then, although this bee very harde to mans nature, yet the Lorde doeth ſtraightly require it at our hands: and ſo that if this be wanting, wee doe but deceiue our ſelues. If we take it in the latter ſenſe, the firſt word to ſignifie the inward affection of loue, the other the outward practice, then we haue heere a notable point to be obſerued, not to ouerſwote our ſelues in our loue, in iudging it to be right, & ſincere, when it is halting, and lame, for many when they heare, that we are ſo ſtraightly charged, for to loue our neighbours, & that without the ſame, there is nothing good in vs or which God accepteth, looke no further but thus, whether they beare any grudge or euill will in their minds, & if they cā ſay I hurt no mā, nor I mean no hurt to any, they perſuade thēſelues that this is an excellent loue. And ſo a ſtone

meaning

meaning no hurte may be saide to loue: other somewhat wiser, do not only loke to that one thing, whether they beare euil wil, but also whether they haue any kind of affection in them, and here they stay, when they shoulde goe yet this step further, to sée that this kindnesse in them breaketh forth into good and charitable déeds: for there may be some louing affection in a man, and yet bring forth but slender fruits, because there is a great slouth in nature, which hindreth men from putting their loue in vre, for loue is labourlom and paineful as Saint Paul setteth it forth 1. Thes. 1. when he saith, Your labouring loue. If then we wil loue the brethren, héere is the touchstone, by which we may proue our loue, that wée spare not for any labour or cost, nor yet war wéery: because loue is not like one that is lazie & luskish, loytering at home within a mans brest, but steppeth abrod and is very diligent: neither doeth it preferre euery light commodities vaine pleasure, before the benefit of the brethren. Then by this it is manifest, how

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that all those which woulde séeme to bée godly, and yet haue cast away the care ouer their brethern, at the least thus farre that they wil neither trauel, nor bear any charge for other mens sake: whose wealth they should procure, especially of the soule, for therein lieth the chiefe trial of loue: because it is a prepostérous thing, to be very tender ouer the bodie, a rotten carkasse, and to pitie the misery thereof so much, & in the meane while, not to care for that that is more precious, namely the soule, the relieuing and healing of which, shall be the happinesse of the whole man for euer. This I speak because wée sée many that will bestowe somewhat vpon the reliefe of thée bodily misery, which haue no pittie vpon mẽ which wander in blindnes & ignorance, whose soules are famished & pined for want of fode, full of deadly woundes and sores which are not salued, bounde in the bands, and chaines of sinne, holden vnder captiuitie by Satan, euen ready to be swallowed vp of the bottomlesse gulfe of hell: the cause in déede is,

that

that they haue not yet learned to pitie their owne soules, and therefore cannot pitie the soules of their brethren: for if they did know the spiritual miserie, they woulde neither spare night nor day in trauelling to haue it eased: wheras now contrariwise they can pull backe men, from godlynesse, and discourage them from seekinge after saluation: they can laugh & sporte themselues in their owne sinnes, and in the sinnes of their neighboures, as though there were no miserie therein, finally, being cruel murtherers of soules, would neuertheleſſe, gladly be deemed charitable: But their bountifull almes, doth want seasoning. Let vs learn therefore to pitie, & to shew kindenes to the bodily necessitie of men, and not to forget especially, & aboue all, to procure with al diligence, as much as lieth in vs, the saluation of their soules: otherwise we can neuer be sayde to ioyne loue and godlynesse together.

In that which followeth in the foure nexte verses, there is shewed partly the great and singular commodities, which

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wée shall reape, if wée bée garnished with these foresaid vertues: and partly the discomodities, which we shall finde in the want of the same. And this S. Peter setteth forth, not staying in the bare declaration of the vertues, which indéed of themselues, being so precious & excellent, should moue vs, but dealeth with vs, as with those which are lumpish, and dul, néeding many spurres, to bée pricked forward withall, and all little enough: let vs bée carefull therefore to take héede to that hée saieth. If these things be with you, & abound, they will make, &c. In this 8. verse hée beginneth to shew the commodities which shal redounde vnto vs, if wée so giue our diligence, that wée may bée richly decked with these graces: they wil make you, saith the Apostle, that yée shall not bée idle, nor vnfruitefull, in the acknowledging of our Lorde Iesus Christe. It is a shamefull thing, when GOD hath shewed himselfe vnto vs in his Sonne, hath called vs into his seruice, out of miserable bondage, for vs to bée idle, and vnfruitefull: If the Lorde haue

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planted vs, if he haue drelled vs, then, as it is also said by our sauiour Christ, Ihō 15. Herein is my father glorified, that ye goe and bring forth much fruite. Then it is by this place very apparant, that a man may draw out a sure & an infallible argument against all those whiche are idle, and slouthfull in the profession of religion, and as they say key colde, or slacke in the worship, & seruice of god, or vnfruiteful in good workes: namely that they are graceles, void of faith & those vertues which doe euer accompany the same: for when S. Peter saith, if these things be with you, they will make that ye shal not bée idle, nor vnfruiteful: it followeth necessarily, that such as be idle, which ariseth for want of zeale, or bée vnfruitefull, continuing in their sins, it is, because they did neuer yet come to the true knowledge of Christ: they may wel boast thēselues, of their strong faith, make a braue shewe of their skil, & fine wit, so that men might think there were some dépe thing in them, & that they should be able euē to iudge, & giue aright verdict in al matters; but a man reading

but

but euen thys place, finding them vile, and vnfruitfull (yea euen a simple man) shall easily sounde them to the bottome, and say of them, that they haue not as yet knowne or learned Christ, because they want those former thynges. We must note thys also, when he sayeth, If these thynges abounde in you: that is, that we shoulde not content our selues with a scant and bare measure of faith, of vertue, of knowledge, and of the rest, as he setteth them downe: but we must labour to haue a dayly increase, for that must be gathered by thys, that he pricketh forwarde these ripe and grounded men. A doctrine most necessarye to bee vrged, because if men haue gone two or three steps, or haue once a little begunne to labour about these thynges, so that they can looke backe, and see some come behinde them, or can say, I thanke God I knowe somewhat, I hope that I am not without faith, somewhat there is which I haue done, that I would be loth to do agayne: they by and by perswade themselues, that they are sufficiētly furnished: so that they will not sticke to say,

I truſt I haue that which ſhall ſerue the turne. May, the Apoſtle telleth vs an other thing heere from the Lord, and that is, that we muſt ouerflow in theſe, and abound: and truth it is, that theſe men which thinke they be well fraught, and ſo ſéeke for no further increaſe of ſtore, haue as yet nothing, for if they had once founde the ſwéete of theſe thinges, and ſéene withall that they are farre behind, and in beggerly néede, they would neuer content themſelues with ſo little: for who is he whiche féeleth increaſe in worldlye treaſure, that wyll crie hoe, and ſay, I haue enough? Is there leſſe in the heauenly treaſures to drawe men to like them, than in the earthly? Or is it beraule men do not knowe them? We muſt learne to take héede of ſuch therefore, as would beare men in hand, that it is ſufficient, yea, that it is the beſt of all, for men to content themſelues with ſome ciuill honeſtie, and not to ſéeke and wearie their minds to gaine knowledge. But theſe were neuer as yet the men, which might be right called the ſcholers of Chriſte, muche leſſe we are to

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deeme them worthy maisters, or teachers of others, when they goe flat contrary to the holy Apostle of Christe, who willeth to seeke for so greate abundance: when as they would content themselues and perswade others to be contented, with scant a shadowe of these thinges, which shoulde bee so plentifully founde in them. Notwithstanding some are so blinde, that hauing no shadow or shewe at all of goodnesse, yet thinke they bee gone farre enough. In the nexte verse where he saith. He that hath not these thinges, is blinde, and seeth not a farre of, and hath forgotten that hee was purged from his old sinnes, hee setteth forth the discomodities which follow the want of these vertues. And this he doth, because some man will bee little moued to heare that commoditie which he spake of, and will say, what care I though I be vile? What care I though I be vnfruitefull? I will not go about to be better then other men, what should I labour to excel those which are wiser then I: if then they wil not regard this, that these vertues will make them

excellent seruants of God, yet let them consider what the Apostle maketh them without the same, where he affirmeth them firste to be blinde, (a verie miserable thing in the bodily sighte, muche more in the spirituall, whiche he heere meaneth:) when God hath so clearely reuealed hymselfe in the face of hys Sonne, in the knowledge whiche bringeth saluation, that the god of this world as S. Paule speaketh 2. Cor. 4. should so blinde their mindes, that the light of the glorious Gospell of Christ, which is the image of God, shoulde not shyne vnto them. Secondly he saith, they cannot see a farre off, or that they be poreblinde, for such as haue the beames of sight scattering or spreading asunder, so sone as they be out of the eye, can see wel enough iust by them, but not a farre off, to these S. Peter doth compare those men. But it may be asked what he meaneth: firste to say they be starke blinde, and afterward to attribute some sight vnto them. It may seeme by this word, that he maketh their cause not so euill, as before he had sayd it was: yes euen as euill, for he saith

saith as much in this word, as he did in the other: for when he sayeth, They can not see a farre off, he taketh from them all sight of heauenly things, which are remoued from vs, & seene only by faith: he doth not denie them the sight of those thynges whyche are at hand, because they haue a good and a sharpe sight in the things of this worlde, for the most part, better then they which can see a far off. But what are these quicke wits the better, when they are but for this world, and their condition no better then that of the poore beast, (yea muche worse) when we respect the misery in the world to come? Let not this therefore cause thē to set vp their bristles, that they can see so well and pearcingly at hand, (that is, in earthly things) when as they are as blinde as beetles in things a far off, that is to say, in heauenly things. Here we must seeke to haue eyes giuen vs of God, with whiche we may be able to see beyond this worlde: for before such time as the Lorde hath giuen vs some glimmering of heauenly things, we shall neuer couet to obteine them. And this is

the cause that these poore blinde men neuer passe greately to know the Gospel of Christe. Thirdly he saith, they haue forgotten that they were purged from their olde sinnes: as hée said they were blinde, so now he saith he, they are forgetfull: and this forgetfulnesse is so much the more shameful, as it is in a chiefe and principal point of true religion. But where shal we find the man, which if he bée examined will confesse that he hath forgotten this point? It séemeth none doe forget it, because the very wicked will séeme to set all vpon this score, that their sins are purged, and that maketh them sinne so frankly. But if we vnderstand the Apostle wel, we shal finde very many which haue forgotten this point. Now here we must first note that our sinnes are said to be purged, when there is satisfaction made for them by redemption in the blood of Christe.

Secondly that they are said to be purged by the grace of sanctificatiõ, when by the power of Gods spirite, sinne, or all sinfull affections are suppressed and killed in vs: so then there is a purging in redemption,

demption, and there is also a purging by sanctification: Nowe if they haue not forgotten so much, but that they can prattle of the purging of their sinnes by redemption, yet they haue forgotten this, that they were redeemed to the ende they shoulde no longer serue sinne but purge away the olde leauen: But being without those former graces, he sayeth they haue forgotten this, not meaning thereby that they had euer learned it, for if they had, yet at the least they had not well learned it: we may see by this howe many there bee, which are starke blinde, and haue forgotten that Christians are called to liue in righteousnesse and holinesse of life. If we loke vpon the small number of those which haue a care to seke after the Lord, and howe small a part of them doe come (I will not say to abounde,) but to haue a competent measure of those forenamed vertues. Let vs come alwayes to this true measure. and not bee deceiued neither in our selues, nor in other. Let vs be ashamed if we be carvall to take vppon vs the name of the true

professours: let vs denie vnto them the honorable name of Christians, which are but filthie swine, and prophane dogs, as our Sauiour Christ calleth them: to conclude this matter, none are allowed to be true receyuers of the Gospell, but such as ioyne vertue with their faith, and with vertue knowledge, and so temperance, patience, godlinesse, brotherly kindnes and loue, and suche as also do seeke to abound in them: the rest which care not for these, or content themselues with the bare shew of them, although they woulde seeme to be worshippers of God, and deuoute persons, yet they are by this doctrine of the Lord wholy shut forth, vntill they haue learned a newe lesson. Remember that this is the doctrine of God, and not of man. Remember that we must stand and dwell vppon it, not for a day, or two, while we haue heard it, but all our life long to bring it to the practise: it is playne and cleere, none can be excused if they know it not, and so through simplicitie stand vppon the common faith, thinking to shroude themselues well vnder the shadow of the

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multitude: but when God hath warned them, who will pitie them, when they will not be warned? if this were not told vs, and that by God hymselfe, we might thinke, as men do commonly, that a verie little doth content the Lord, that no greate thinges are required at the hands of Christians, and other such foolish and vayne opinions, as to say, they must hope well, when God telleth them there is no hope, vnlesse they walke this way: also, that it is not good to be ouer-precise, when as in goodnesse a man can not procede too farre, nor offer too much obedience to the Lorde. To make an ende, let none of all these thynges blinde vs, because they blinde some, which stand in reputation of their owne wisedome.

The fourth Sermon.

10 Wherefore brethren, giue rather diligence to make your calling & election ſure: for if ye do theſe things ye ſhall neuer fall.

11 For by this meanes an entring ſhal be miniſtred vnto you abundātly into the euerlaſting kingdō of our Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt.

IT hath beene tolde vnto you alreadye, vppon the verſes which goe nexte before, howe that Saint Peter regarding how dull we are and backward in godlineſſe, contented not himſelfe with his exhortation which he maketh, but ſetteth downe what we ſhall gaine if we follow his aduiſe, and alſo what hurt we ſhall ſuſtaine by the contrary: and this hath partly beene handled in the two other verſes, & partly in theſe two which we haue now in hand: where indeede he doth propound ſo great a commoditie which we ſhal gaine, if we giue all diligence

gente to purſue the former things, as is almoſt incomparable, euē this, that wee ſhall come to the aſſurance, that wee are called & choſen of God: a thinge ſo neceſſary for vs to knowe, that without it there is no right faith, no frank and willing obedience, no ſounde loye. For although without this, men ſeeme to beleeue, yet is it but a wauering fantaſy, to do many good things, yet they proceede but from a ſeruile mind, to laugh and reioyce, yet is it but in a deſperate madnes which in very deede is greatly to be wondered at, howe men ſhoulde bee able to ſport themſelues, & yet to ſpeake in their cōſciences after this manner, there is hell and eternall flames of vengeance prepared for ſinners, and I am not ſure whether I ſhall eſcape or not: this deſperate and brutiſh ſecuritie ſhalbe apparant to bee the more mad, if we compare it, and ſet it forth by an outwarde compariſon. Let it bethus, a man is taken in a robberie or murther, impriſoned, brought before the Iudge, and condemned, by ſute of friendes reprieued vntill ſuche time as they may ſue for

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to get him a pardon: in the meane time, some of his acquaintance come to thys murtherer, and will him to be of good chære and merrie, he will answere, vnlesse he be some mad and desperate ruffian, I am condemned to the gallowes, the Iudge hath pronounced the sentence of death vppon me, I knowe not howe hard a thing it will be to obteine a pardon, I stand in great doubt, and for thys cause I cannot be merry, vnlesse I might knowe for certaintie that I shoulde escape, if I did once know that, I could be as merrie as any man that liueth, before that time I may seeme to laugh, but my heart is full of feare and sorrowe. And is it not thus with vs all? are we not all of vs guiltie, and alreadie condemned by the sentence of the highest Iudge? not to some torment of one day, or short continuance, but to the fire that shall neuer be quenched? When men can be merrie therefore and laugh euen in those things which cause this destruction, and yet do feele that they are not sure to escape this dreadfull vengeance, is it not a mad mirth and a desperate laughter?

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in which, if they were not become verie senseleſſe blockes, they ſhould feele many gripings at the hart, which would marre all their mirth, yea a worme that gnaweth in ſuche wiſe, that they can haue no quiet reſt, nor as I ſayd before no ſound ioy. If we were not therefore more then deſperate and mad fooles, the thought of hell would damne all our mirth, vntyll ſuch time as we be ſure that we haue eſcaped it. This then whiche the Apoſtle ſaith here, is a princely commodity, that walking the way which he hath preſcribed, we ſhall come to the aſſurance, that we are the called and choſen of the Lord. But it may be demanded how this can agree with other ſayings in the holy ſcriptures, which do playnely teach that God choſeth whome he will of his owne free grace, for which S. Paule alleadgeth out of Moſes, that God will haue mercy on whome ſoeuer he will haue mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth: adding therupō that it is neither of him that willeth, nor yet of him that runneth, but of God which ſheweth mercy: againe the doctrine of Popery is, that God doth make

choyſe,

choise, cõditionally respecting the good deedes which he did foresee in them: & so the election should depend vpon the worthines of the mẽ: we are to answere that this place hath nothing in it which is contrary to that frée choise which God maketh without respecte of any thinge that is in vs, for he coulde finde nothing in vs that might any way moue him, neither doth it serue at al for to proue that election is conditionall: because S. Peter doth not handle in this place, whereupon election is founded, or what moued god to make choise, nor to shew wherein the certaintie & stablenesse of election doth stand: but his meaning is, to teach vs how we shall attaine to this incomparable treasure, to be out of doubt, and surely resolued in our selues, not by fantasied opinions, but by sure & substãtiall proofe, that we be chosen of God, and therefore cannot perish. If we respect ỳ vnchangeable counsell of God, therein doth rest alone the sure foundation of election, because God which cannot bée deceiued, nor cannot repent, or change, hath made the choise, therefore those whome

whome he hath chosen, can neuer perish: but if we regarde the way & meanes, by which we may come to know this fauor of God to be toward vs, the Lord by his apostle selleth vs, that this is ỳ way, cũ to giue all diligence & study, to be richly decked with his graces, or those so named vertues, for by these we shall vndoubtedly know, because if we haue thẽ, if they abound in vs, if we walke in thẽ, we shal as he saith, neuer fal: let vs lern therefore fir& this, that election in it selfe resteth vpon the vnchangeable purpose & councel of God. Then secõdly that we are not to fetch the certainty of it in our selues, from some reuelation, neither are we to clime vp into heauen, to search in the counsels of God whether our names be in ỳ booke of life. But we are to fetch our warant from within our selues, and that from the fruites of the spirite, which indeed although it be out of our selues, yet because it is not of our selues, is certain & infallible. If ye wil vnderstãd this more plainly, first I say, it is out of our selues or from within our selues because we must take the triall, whether those

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things be in vs, which are giuen to all thole whome God doeth chuſe, then I ſay it is not of ourſelues, for if it were, it ſhould be altogether vncertaine. But of the ſeale of God wherewith he hath ſealed vs, which is the ſpirite of ſanctificati-on: now marke well I pray you, If you do (ſaith S. Peter) theſe things, you ſhal neuer fall: and why is it becauſe our doings are ſo perfect and ſure, or that we are ſo conſtant of our ſelues? no not ſo, but by theſe vertues we know we that we are ſealed with Gods ſpirit, whoſe worke we feele in vs: we knowe alſo that as many as are led by the ſpirit of God, are the ſonnes of God. Rom. 8. From hence it commeth, that loke how much more a man feeleth in hymſelfe the increaſe of knowledge, the increaſe of vertues and heauenlie deſires, ſo much more ſure he is, that he is the childe of God, and as the one increaſeth, ſo increaſeth alſo the other. Contrarywiſe, when a man feeleth within hymſelfe an euill conſcience, feeleth that hee is darkened in hys vnderſtanding, lead by the luſtes of ſinne: he ſhall in ſpite of hys

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teth within himselfe, singe this dolefull songe: I know not whether I shall bee saued or not. And loke howe the other may say: I know I shall bee saued, because god hath sealed me with his spirit: so may this say, I am sure to be damned contynuing in this case, because I haue no faith, but only a wauering and doubtfull opinion. We may see by this how beneficiall they are, and mercifull to their owne soules, which with all their power day and night giue vp themselues to seeke after ỹ knowledge and obedience of the Lords will: for not giuing ouer, nor waring weary, they shall in continuance of time, if they ply it hard, find such a blessing from the Lorde in the increase of faith and vertue, that wil cause them to say, we haue not lost our labor. On the other side we may see how vnkind and cruell they are to themselues, which through idleneſſe. and slouth, in seeking after God, with their dayly and continuall sinnes, do euen as it were cut the throte of their faithe, seeinge they cannot haue trust in him, whom they doe so much disobey. This place is as a mighty engin to ouerthrow the vanitye of sundry opini-

ons which doe reigne in men. As first of al in those ỹ try out against this doctrin, as a thing which will make men careleſſe and idle in the ſeruice of God, and ſtoppe the courſe of good workes, I beſeech you mark howe well theſe great wiſe men haue profited in Gods ſchoole, ſée howe they agrée with the holy Apoſtle, he ſayeth wée are to giue all our ſtudye and diligence in good workes to come to the ſure and vndoubted knowledge, that we be choſen vnto life: they ſaye quite contrary, if ye will haue men carefull of well doing, away with the doctrine of election, for it wil marre all: thus the wiſdome of fleſhe doth proudly lift vp it ſelfe euen againſt God (but howe foliſhly, a very childe may ſée:) Doth that thing, which wée cannot come to the knowledge of without exceeding care of godlyneſſe, abundance of vertue, and plentie of all good workes, deſtroye in men the ſtudye and care of good workes? But proud fleſhe is worthylie blind. Some other, although not thus brutiſhlye blinded, yet greatlye ouerſéene, when they thinke on this doctrine, which is ſet vp vnto vs as the marke for vs to

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aime at in all our doings, and triall whether we haue done well or not: I meane the triall in this respecte, and when a man hath done many good deedes, he shall know he hath not done them well, if he yet doubt whether he be one of gods chosen, for howsoeuer he palleth it ouer, yet his conscience (which doth in some sorte knowe, that hee, hath not dealte but for vaine glorye, or some other finister respecte) will not suffer him to haue this faith.

For God doth not worke so darklie by his spirit in men, but that they may learn to know whether it be of him, if they wold make a due trial: because we must not rest in the outward doing of good thinges, but in the right doing.

Let him therefore which giueth himselfe to doe good workes (and yet feeleth not this, which Saincte Peter saith, we shall) suspect that his doinges are misshapen, and be carefull to fashion them after the rules of the worde.

A thirde sorte of of men there be which with mighte and maine will defende and maintaine this doctryne, that men ought

to be sure of salvation, ꝑ we cannot more honour God, then to give ful credite to his promises, and because the plaine testimonie of the scripture compelleth them, they affirme it constantly, and condemne the the contrary as a foule error, that god hath chosē men, & mē come to sāle, & to know this: And therfore because it is a true doctrine, they say also that they themselues are sure, that God hath chosen them, but when they take not the way to become sure, Which S. Peter here hath set downe, but goe in a contrary path and are spotted with filthy crimes, we may boldly say, they be lyars: for although they brag with their tongues of that that they shoulde bee, yet there is a bird in their breft, which doth sing in a contrarie note, and telleth them plainely what they bee. Another kinde of men there be, which in no case can bee perswaded, that any man may be sure of his salvation, and therefore with scoffs they aske of them which professe the word when God told them so: If it were a thing which were not, or coulde not be known, then the Apostle hath greatly overshot himselfe, in telling vs how we shall come

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to bee sure. But aske a question of them, whether they doe not beleeue in God: euery one will answere, I put al my whole trust in him: reason them a little further, and tell them, that the scripture which cannot lye, saith, That all which trust in god shall be saued: how than will they ioyne these togither, that they truste in GOD, and yet doubt whether they shal be saued. Can God deceiue? or say they, they know not what? Undoubtedly if they did know that they haue trust, they should also know they cannot perish. But let vs learne by this the misery of our time: in which men doe thinke still this doctrine to be strange. Now let vs come to the particular application of this doctrine, in which euery one must come home to him selfe, remēbringe first, that such as God hath called home to himselfe, and chosen to be his children, hee doth also giue vnto them true faith and feeling that they be his elect: and suche as perceiue no such thinge in themselues: are in a very miserable case, and as yet we may say, forlorne creatures: therefore euery man in himselfe must aske this question, of his owne soule: how goeth the mat-

ter with thée? Art thou sure God hath chosen thée: dost thou fele any assurance of eternall life? The conscience will answere vpryghtly, if we be not negligent to make inquirie: then if we fynd this within: I am not sure for I doubt and stagger, we must inquire with our selues thus: what is the cause? God is faithfull which hath promised eternall life vnto all which beleeue: our hart will make aunswere, thou regardest not y feare of god, thou art full of foule sins, euil lusts do reign in the thou dost not study for the knowledge of Gods worde: thou art vnfruitefull and barren in good workes; therefore thou canst not say, I am led by the spirit of God, and therefore sure I shall be saued: if he be wise he will not stay here, as the maner of foles is, saying I am not sure indéede: neyther do I think any man can bee, I commit it to God, let him do with me what he will: these speaches maye séeme to haue some witte and godlynesse in them, but they are indéed diuelishe and madde, because God hath taught vs a contrarye lesson in this place, but goe this steppe further, may I come to this assurance? and which is the way?

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The Lorde doth answere by his Apostle: thou maiest come to this assurance, and pointeth him out the way: euen that which you haue heard, wherein he must painefully trauell and goe forward, not for a gird or a braid, and waxe idle againe, but still labor, for these men had gone a great way and yet they are willed to proceede still if ỹ Lord giue not this assurance, we are to labor, & so much ỹ more to be importunate, to suspect our iudgement, and to séeke for knowledge, to call our selues to a more straight account, to set a watch ouer our affections, to sée with what minde wée doe things, to foster no sinne willingly in vs, nor to be slacke to any good worke which God hath appointed, to call and cry vnto God for faith, and his spirit to guide vs, to vse the meanes diligẽtly which God hath appointed, as the hearing, searching and meditating in the worde: thus in time (for it is wrought in men by degrées, and they neuer come to the full) God will let them sée that he is their GOD. That neither life nor death, height or depth, thinges present or thinges to come, Angels, nor Principallities, nor powers,

nor any creature shall seperate vs from his loue in Christ. It followeth in the next verse; for by this meanes an entring shall be ministred vnto you aboundantlye into the euerlasting kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a confirmation of the last clause of the former sentence, where he saith. If you do these thinges, you shall neuer fall: and why? because you shal haue a great entrance into the eternall kingdome of Christ, as that is a confirmation of the other where he saith Make your calling and election sure, as the reasō followeth there. We shall come to be sure: howe because he which proceedeth so far that he knoweth he shall neuer fall away from God to destruction, hee is, (as it must needs bee) sure also that he is chosen: for he speaketh not here of euery particular fall into sinne, which is the most godly: but, saith S. Peter, I tel you if ye doe these things, ye shall neuer fall, not because there is any such stablenesse in our selues, or in our owne works, but we know they be ỹ fruites of Gods spirit in vs, which is his seale, set vppon none but those whome he doth mark vp to life eternal, and he is vn-

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changeable: so it followeth here, ye shall not fall, for they that haue a rich entrance into the kingdome of Christe, which is euerlasting, so that Christe doth reigne in them, as he doth in all the faithfull by his spirite, cannot fall, vntill the power of Christe faile, and his kingdome come to an ende. For we must note, that the force of the reason, resteth in ý difference which is betwéene the kingdome of Christe and the kingdoms of this worlde: in which though they be neuer so mightie, and ful of policie and wisedom, yet they should come to an end: and therfore a mā cannot rightly say vnto the subiects, you haue a mighty Prince, who is bountiful and gracious, your peace therfore and happy estate shall endure for euer: nay, the mightie may be ouercome, if not by men, at least wise by death, and so they may be to day in peace and good estate, to morow al in an vprore, to day vnder a louing and gracious prince, to morow vnder a fierce tyrant: so vncertaine is the state of the kingdome of this worlde: but in the kingdome of Christe, whose power is aboue all, and can neuer come to an end, but is, as he saith here, e-

ternall, it is farre otherwise, because his state is vnchangeable, so is theirs that be once entred thereinto, and therefore are sure they can neuer fall. Whosoeuer doth euen straightly looke ouer these wordes of the apostle, if he haue any sight at al, he must nedes confesse all this, the matter is so cleere, that we can but marualle how it should come to passe that this doctrine of the Lord, set forth by his apostle, should finde so fewe friendes, and so many extreme enimies: but indeed men which are lyers, doe in this thinge confesse the truth that they fele not any such matter, & therfore cannot abide to heare that al true godly men, and faithfull christians haue this knowledge in themselues: but let vs giue eare to ỹ apostle, who telleth vs howe we shal come to haue Christ to be our king, & to reigne ouer vs, namely if we yeld vppe our selues to the gouernance of the spirite, which worke al goodnes in our harts, subduing & vãquishing all the rebells which we beare about in vs. Contrariewise it must nedes be grãted ỹ such as are beastly epicurs, folowing their own fleshly mind, letting lose the rains, & giuing the swinge

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vnto the raging lusts of the flesh, despising the knowledge of Gods wil, and therefore regard not his word: though w̄ full mouth they cal christ their king & their lord: yet when god saith here by his apostle that ỹ entrance into his kingdom is by meanes, that mē follow after vertue, knowledge & godlinesse: they shew that they be none of his subiects, being altogither void of his spirit, but the bōdslaues of sin and sathan, whose kindome they vphold with teth & nails: & that maketh them, euen as those which are of another corporation to, fight against the truth, & those which professe it: deuising al the colours & shifts they can to maintaine sin, inuenting al the slanders ỹ may be to discredit the godly conuersatiō of such as follow the way here prescribed: cōdemning them as ouerprecise & curious if they do but looke this way, which GOD willeth al his seruāts to walk: if God doe opē their eies, to sée but eue̅ in a glimering, ỹ which he doth teach in this place, they would be ashamed of their master & blush at ỹ, which now they boast & brag of, they would also confesse ỹ, like blind buzzards & mad beasts, they haue fought against god

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and not men: finally it would make them change their wayes, and seeke diligently to haue the witnesse within themselues, that they bee the seruantes of God. We muste marke well one other thing which is here spoken, to wit that he saith, an entraunce shall be ministred vnto you, abundantlye or richly: as if he should say, when ye haue labored & travelled, to be as it were well soked and seasoned in godlynes, & plentifully decked with all graces and giftes of the spirite, ye shall by degres proceede so far, and gaine so much, that your entrance into the kingdome of Christe shalbe very great, whereupon it doth follow, that they shall be past danger, & may well warrante themselues of sure standing, in as muche as Christ hath not only begon to reigne in them, & to be their king, but also in greate measure and mightyly. But doth he not adde this one worde more then needeth? is it not ynough to haue an entrance, vnlesse we haue a rich entrance to his kingdome? Doth christ once begin to raigne in a man, and to driue out the power of Sathan, and afterward cast him of again to distruction? I answere that this word is not added in vaine,

vaine, for we be taught thereby to take hed that we content not our selues with some little taste and small entrance: for his purpose is to make a difference betweene such on the one part as make some beginning, and haue some good desires and motions in them, and do tast of the good word of god, and are in some sort lightned, but ouercome with sinful lusts, and vaine delights of the flesh, they slide back againe suddenly, they were but for a brunt, it bringeth foorth no ripe fruite in them, neither, to speake properly, did Christe euer raigne in them: and such on the other part as proceede vnto the depe rooting out of sinne, & sure and fast planting the truthe in their hartes, going forward dayly from grace to grace, and from strength to strength, vntil Christ haue set vp his throne in them, and beare sway to the ouerthrow of the power of darknes, and bereauing the Deuill of the interest he had, & thrusting him frō the possession which he held: a doctrine ỹ must nēds doe vs much good if we beleeue stand very nēdful to be vrged instantly, considering the nature and disposition of men at this day: they are afraid of going to

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far in vertue & knowledge, they count it a needles thing to be admonished or taught diligently, they take scorne to be be counted such as may be amended, yea and ỳ which is more, whē as they haue not learned the first point of a Christian scholler, they will seeme perfect: so farre are they from hauing this abundant entring into the kingdome of Christe.

Learne here therfore, dearely beloued, and learne it well, lay sure hold thereof, ỳ it do not slip from you, for God teacheth vs here the only way to life and happines: let goe the vaine dreames & doltish opinions of people sotted in their ignorance, which are so farre blinded by the malice of satā, that which way so euer they goe, still they are in hope of eternall glory, as though the way to heauen were so broad that a man coulde no goe out of it, and the entrance so easie, that he may enter when he will: for this is the diuinitie of our time: howsoeuer a man spende his tyme in ignorance, not caring for, nor seeking after the true knowledge of GOD, howsoeuer he be defiled with foule and beastlye sins, that indede there be nothinge in him

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but pride, selfeloue, vainegloрye, enuie, gluttony, the lustes of adultrye, and suche like, yea, so farre, that the scripture doth liken him to a swine or a dogge: yet if as they say, he haue God in his minde, & can say, Lord haue mercy vpon me, they think this is all that can be required of men, they wil not sticke to acquite al such, being nothing at all acquainted with that, which God telleth in this place by his Apostle how far mē must proceed in his fear before they can wel warrant themselues to be in good case. For ye may as wel ioyn heauen and hell togither, fire and water will allone agree, light and darknes are as like one another, as the common faith is to that we are are taught in this place: But I will returne to applie this doctrine to the godly, for whome it is written: how they may, as we vse to saye, make this thing dead sure: for there is many a godly man, which after long trauel, and much care to please God, is yet so matched with stubborne nature, so depelye infected and poysoned with sinne, that he is compelled, although he haue gained much, and doeth feele the power of Gods spirite in him

in him, sometimes to bée in doubte, and to thinke his labor but lost, because he cannot get so great a victory as he would faine, let not this man be dismaied, but let him goe forward, remẽbring what is here promised: the more he wanteth, the more let him strive, and he shall plainly perceiue, that God regardeth his care and trauell, considereth his sighes and grones, and will performe all his desires: let him remember that these men whom Saincte Peter wrot vnto had obteined the precious faith: did knowe and were established in that present truth, and yet they were not so far but ý they may be moued to make their election sure, to séeke a further entrance into the kingdome of Christ: & so to continue ý which was but begun. We ought the more to be moued herevnto, because the world is euer full of fearefull examples, which if they were well considered, wold make a mans haire to stand vpright, whẽ he shal se that for want of this doctrine, or at ý least the not practising of it, there be many which séeme not only to haue had some liking of the truth, but also a greate zeale, euen to suffer some what for the same,

ſame, which are become euen as cold as yce, and ſcarce any point of godlines left in thē: yea though they would beare mē in hand that they haue, like good ſcholers proceéded to the higheſt forme, yet when our great mayſter ſhall poſe them, they ſhall not be allowed to ſit in the loweſt: ſo dāgerous a thing it is once to relēt or ſlacken our care, vntill we haue gotten this full aſſurance, and made this rich entrance into the kingdome of Chriſte, that we feele our ſelues led by the ſpirit of God, and feele it, not by any vaine conceite of our owne foliſh braine, nor by ſenſeleſſe ſecuritie, but by the working and fruites of the ſame ſpirit. If this were well weyhed, men would not content themſelues with ſo little, or nothing: they would not make ſo light account of teaching: they would leaue of the ſlandrous and reprochfull railings: they would not like filthye ſwine wallow themſelues ſtil in the filthy mire of their ſins: they would not prattle ſomuch of this, that all are ſinners, and therefore thinke al are alike, ſhuffeling togither one with another: nay God will ſuffer them, for he hath taught here who be

godly and faithfull, such as he taketh and accepteth for his children: and who be vngodly Infidels, children of the deuill, and heires of hell. For in very deede, thoughe al be sinners, yet they greatly differ: for some continue in their sins, seducing and deceiuing themselues with vaine hope of Gods mercy: some doe repente after the manner here prescribed them, which standeth in this, that they cleanse themselues more and more from all filthynesse of the flesh, and growe in all vertues and graces, vntill they be derked in their soules with heauenly ornaments, and haue yelded vp themselues to haue Christ raigne in them. As for the common repentance, to cry only with wordes for mercy, in some light measure to be greeued, to feare the iudgements of God, and yet the soule within nothing changed, nor the spirit renued, nor Christ reigning in the heart: it doth but deceiue al which trust to it. Most true it is that what time so euer a sinner doth repēt he is forgiuen: but this is as like that repentance, which is here by S. Peter described, as we say, an Apple is to an Oyster: for if we loke well vnto them both,

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we shall finde them to agree in very fewe things, and those euen the least. Let vs I say once againe fasten our stepps in this way, let vs goe forward, and not so much as looke backe, vntil such time as we haue by our owne experience, proued that to be true which is taught by Saint Peter. For it is not enough to beleeue that this is true (although that be somewhat) vnlesse we try it to be so by our selues. He is now a starke fole which saith this to be the only way to happinesse, and for slouth will not walke in it: as though the kingdome of heauen were not worth the trauelinge for. We may gather also in this place, if we be not senceles, how great enimies they be to the saluation of men: which woulde vtterly debarre them of the worde, that is appointed to bee the instrument by which God worketh all these good things in his seruantes: for without that (as it may be easily gathered here) we can do nothing. It doth also appeare, that those are in a miserable case whose office and dutie is, not only to shew men some part of Gods wil, but to bring them thus far as S. Peter doth require, if they be not

well furnished and haue walked first this way themselues: for how shall they bring other men to that, which themselues haue not, nor know not. It doth appeare also that God hath shewed a sore iudgemēt against that people, which haue such a guide as cannot shew them this way: which is the only way to heauen: for doubtlesse it is more then if he should thunder vpon them from heauē, or fire their houses ouer their heads: especially when they are so blinde, that they see not the plague, but thinke themselues in better case then those whom God doth ouerrule by his word. But wo and woe againe be to those blinde guides and shepherds, which do not feede: & wretched is that people which are as sheepe wout a shepheard. For how shall they heare euer of those things: we can but pity their misery, & desire the Lord to send redresse, in so lamentable and desperate a case: which is thought to be nothing, because indeed the most men knowe nothing: for had they but knowne what God requireth in that man whom he will saue, though they were not partakers of it themselues, yet they would consente and agree to the

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doctrine: and confesse that there is no way to attaine eternall life, but by so sound teaching as may bring people to the things here required. But I will here make an end.

O Lord grant, that this doctrine which thou hast taught vs in this thy holy word, may enter into vs and dwell in vs for euer: that so we may be sure of thy fauour and of eternall life, through Iesus Christ thy deare sonne our Lorde and only Sauiour,

AMEN.

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